CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (previously presented) A method for fitting a suspension walker on a patient to transfer at least a portion of the patient's weight normally applied to the patient's foot to the patient's calf to thereby at least partially suspend the patient's foot in the walker, said method including the steps of:

(a) providing a hard, outer boot shell with upright brace members on each side respectively extending upwardly to positions adjacent each side of the patient's calf,

(b) providing a soft boot on said hard, outer boot shell to receive the patient's foot with said soft boot having at least a main pad and a removable, fitting pad atop said main pad,

(c) providing a cuff member securable about the patient's calf and securable to said brace members,

(d) securing said cuff member about the patient's calf,

(e) placing the patient's foot in the soft boot atop said removable, fitting pad and said main pad,

(f) securing said cuff member to each brace member at respective locations therealong, and

(g) removing said fitting pad wherein said portion of the patient's weight normally applied to the foot is transferred to and borne by the patient's calf via the cuff member secured to said brace members of the hard, outer boot shell to at least partially suspend the patient's foot in the walker.

2. (original) The fitting method of claim 1 wherein step (f) includes the further limitation of releasably securing said cuff member to said brace members.

3. (original) The fitting method of claim 1 wherein step (f) includes the further limitation of releasably securing said cuff member to said brace members with pairs of mating hook and loop fasteners respectively mounted between said cuff member and said brace members.

4. (original) The fitting method of claim 3 further including the limitation of extending one of each pair of said hook and loop fasteners vertically along each brace member and wherein the fitting method further includes the limitation prior to step (f) of providing a removable barrier between the respective mating pairs of hook and loop fasteners of each brace member and the cuff member and further includes the limitation between steps (e) and (f) of removing said barriers.

5. (original) The fitting method of claim 4 further including the limitation of providing said barriers by sliding respective tubular cover members over the respective brace members.

6. (original) The fitting method of claim 1 further including the step of vertically adjusting the locations of the securement of the cuff member to the brace members.

7. (original) The fitting method of claim 1 further including the step of vertically and infinitely adjusting the locations of the securement of the cuff member to the brace members

8. (previously presented) The fitting method of claim 1 wherein step (b) includes the further limitation of providing a second, removable fitting pad atop the first mentioned fitting pad and the main pad.

9. (previously presented) The fitting method of claim 1 wherein step (b) includes the further limitation of providing a second, removable fitting pad atop the first mentioned fitting pad and the main pad and step (g) includes the further limitation of removing said second fitting pad.

10. (original) The fitting method of claim 1 wherein step (d) includes the further limitation of securing said cuff member about the calf of the patient with laces.

11. (original) The fitting method of claim 1 further including the step of:

(h) wrapping at least one strap member about said brace members secured to the cuff member.

12. (original) The fitting method of claim 11 further including the limitation in step (h) of securing said one strap member in place about said brace members with mating hook and loop fasteners.

13. (original) The fitting method of claim 11 further including the limitation in step (h) of securing said one strap member to said brace members with hook and loop fasteners.

14. (original) The fitting method of claim 13 further including the limitation of extending one of the hook and loop fasteners vertically along each brace member.

15. (original) The fitting method of claim 1 further including the limitation of providing an elastic, expandable heel section on the lower rear area of the cuff member.

16. (original) The fitting method of claim 1 further including the limitation of transferring at least about 10% to about 75% of the patient's normal weight on the foot to the patient's calf via the cuff member secured to said brace members.

17. (original) The fitting method of claim 1 further including the limitation of transferring about 40% to about 60% of the patient's normal weight on the foot to the patient's calf via the cuff member secured to said brace members.

18. (original) The fitting method of claim 1 further including the limitation of selecting at least one of the outer

boot shell, soft boot, and cuff member from at least two different, prefabricated sizes.

19. (original) The fitting method of claim 1 wherein each of the outer boot shell, soft boot, and cuff member is selected from at least two different, prefabricated sizes.

20. (original) The fitting method of claim 1 further including the limitations of providing said cuff member with two side pieces, attaching a plurality of laces adjacent one end of each lace to one of said side pieces, passing said laces through eyelets on the other side piece, securing the other end of each lace to a strip, and wrapping said strip about said brace members and cuff member to draw said laces tight.

21. (previously presented) A method for fitting a suspension walker on a patient to transfer at least a portion of the patient's weight normally applied to the patient's foot to the patient's calf to thereby at least partially suspend the patient's foot in the walker, said method including the steps of:

(a) providing a hard, outer boot shell with upright brace members on each side respectively extending upwardly to positions adjacent each side of the patient's calf,

(b) providing a soft boot on said hard, outer boot shell to receive the patient's foot with said soft boot having at least a main pad and a removable, fitting pad atop said main pad,

(c) providing a cuff member secured to said brace members and securable about the patient's calf,

(d) placing the patient's foot in the soft boot atop said removable, fitting pad and said main pad,

(e) securing said cuff member about the patient's calf, and

(f) removing said fitting pad wherein said portion of the patient's weight normally applied to the foot is transferred to and borne by the patient's calf via the cuff member secured to

said brace members of the hard, outer boot shell to at least partially suspend the patient's foot in the walker.

22. (previously presented) The fitting method of claim 21 wherein step (b) includes the further limitation of providing a second, removable fitting pad atop the first mentioned fitting pad and the main pad.

23. (previously presented) The fitting method of claim 21 wherein step (b) includes the further limitation of providing a second, removable fitting pad atop the first mentioned fitting pad and the main pad and step (f) includes the further limitation of removing said second fitting pad.

24. (original) The fitting method of claim 21 wherein step (e) includes the further limitation of securing said cuff member about the calf of the patient with laces.

25. (original) The fitting method of claim 21 further including the step of:

(g) wrapping at least one strap member about said brace members secured to the cuff member.

26. (original) The fitting method of claim 25 further including the limitation in step (g) of securing said one strap member in place about said brace members with mating hook and loop fasteners.

27. (original) The fitting method of claim 25 further including the limitation in step (g) of securing said one strap member to said brace members with hook and loop fasteners.

28. (original) The fitting method of claim 21 further including the limitation of providing an elastic, expandable heel section on the lower rear area of the cuff member.

29. (original) The fitting method of claim 21 further including the limitation of transferring at least about 10% to about 75% of the patient's normal weight on the foot to the patient's calf via the cuff member secured to said brace members.

30. (original) The fitting method of claim 21 further including the limitation of transferring about 40% to about 60% of the patient's normal weight on the foot to the patient's calf via the cuff member secured to said brace members.

31. (original) The fitting method of claim 21 further including the limitations of providing said cuff member with two side pieces, attaching a plurality of laces adjacent one end of each lace to one of said side pieces, passing said laces through eyelets on the other side piece, securing the other end of each lace to a strip, and wrapping said strip about said brace members and cuff member to draw said laces tight.

32. (previously presented) A suspension walker to transfer at least a portion of a patient's weight normally applied to the patient's foot to the patient's calf to thereby at least partially suspend the patient's foot in the walker, said suspension walker including:

a hard, outer boot shell with upright brace members on each side respectively extending upwardly to positions adjacent each side of the patient's calf,

a soft boot on said hard, outer boot shell to receive the patient's foot with said soft boot having at least a main pad and a removable, fitting pad atop said main pad, and

a cuff member securable about the patient's calf and securable to said brace members wherein the patient's foot can be placed in the soft boot atop said removable fitting pad and main pad, said cuff member can be secured to said brace members at respective locations therealong, and said fitting pad can be removed wherein said portion of the patient's weight normally

applied to the foot can be transferred to and borne by the patient's calf via the cuff member secured to said brace members of the hard, outer boot shell to at least partially suspend the patient's foot in the walker.

33. (original) The suspension walker of claim 32 wherein said cuff member is releasably securable to said brace members.

34. (original) The suspension walker of claim 32 wherein said cuff member is infinitely, adjustably securable to said brace members vertically along a predetermined length of each brace member.

35. (original) The suspension walker of claim 32 wherein said cuff member is releasably securable to said brace members by pairs of mating hook and loop fasteners respectively mounted between said cuff member and said brace members.

36. (original) The suspension walker of claim 35 wherein one of each pair of mating hook and loop fasteners is mounted vertically along each brace member and the respective other of each pair of mating hook and loop fasteners is mounted to the cuff member.

37. (original) The suspension walker of claim 32 wherein said cuff member is releasably securable about the calf of the patient by laces.

38. (previously presented) The suspension walker of claim 32 further including at least a second, removable fitting pad positional atop the first mentioned fitting pad and the main pad.

39. (original) The suspension walker of claim 32 further including at least one strap member securable about said brace members.

40. (original) The suspension walker of claim 32 further including an elastic, expandable heel section on the lower rear area of the cuff member.

41. (original) The suspension walker of claim 32 wherein said cuff member has two side pieces with a plurality of laces adjacent one end of each lace attached to one of said side pieces, said laces passing through eyelets on the other side piece with the other end of each lace secured to a strip wherein said strip can be wrapped about said brace members and cuff member to draw said laces tight.

42. (currently amended) A suspension walker to transfer at least a portion of a patient's weight normally applied to the patient's foot to the patient's calf to thereby at least partially suspend the patient's foot in the walker, said suspension walker including:

a hard, outer boot shell with upright brace members on each side respectively extending upwardly to positions adjacent each side of the patient's calf,

a soft boot on said hard, outer boot shell to receive the patient's foot with said soft boot having at least a main pad, and

a cuff member separate from said soft boot and securable about the patient's calf <u>in a position between and within said upright braces</u>, said cuff member being infinitely, adjustably securable to said brace members vertically along a predetermined length of each brace member in at least two positions spaced different distances from said soft boot.

43. (original) The suspension walker of claim 42 wherein said cuff member is infinitely, adjustably securable to said brace members by respective pairs of mating hook and loop fasteners respectively mounted vertically along said cuff member and each of said brace members.

44. (original) The suspension walker of claim 43 wherein each brace member has inner and outer sides and one of each pair of mating hook and loop fasteners is mounted vertically on the inner side of each brace member.

45. (original) The suspension walker of claim 42 wherein said cuff member is releasably securable about the calf of the patient by laces.

46. (currently amended) The suspension walker of claim 42 further including at least one strap member securable about said upright brace members and about said cuff member.

47. (previously presented) A suspension walker to transfer at least a portion of a patient's weight normally applied to the patient's foot to the patient's calf to thereby at least partially suspend the patient's foot in the walker, said suspension walker including:

a hard, outer boot shell with upright brace members on each side respectively extending upwardly to positions adjacent each side of the patient's calf,

a soft boot on said hard, outer boot shell to receive the patient's foot with said soft boot having at least a main pad, and

a cuff member securable about the patient's calf and infinitely, adjustably securable to said brace members vertically along a predetermined length of each brace member, and an elastic, expandable heel section on the lower rear area of the cuff member.

48. (previously presented) A suspension walker to transfer at least a portion of a patient's weight normally applied to the patient's foot to the patient's calf to thereby at least partially suspend the patient's foot in the walker, said suspension walker including:

a hard, outer boot shell with upright brace members on each side respectively extending upwardly to positions adjacent each side of the patient's calf,

a soft boot on said hard, outer boot shell to receive the patient's foot with said soft boot having at least a main pad, and

a cuff member securable about the patient's calf and infinitely, adjustably securable to said brace members vertically along a predetermined length of each brace member wherein said cuff member has two side pieces with a plurality of laces adjacent one end of each lace attached to one of said side pieces, said laces passing through eyelets on the other side piece with the other end of each lace secured to a strip wherein said strip can be wrapped about said brace members and cuff member to draw said laces tight.